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# THE IMMOBILITY OF LOW-PAID WORKERS

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*This paper extends the labor segmentation perspective on unequal job access. Analyzed here are Census data on the occupational mobility of low-paid workers during the period 1965 to 1970. Upward mobility, defined as movement from a low-paid to a mainstream stratum, is far more common for white men than for women and blacks—even after controlling for differences in age, education, and type of low-paid job. A worker's particular low-paid occupation also strongly affects chances of entering the mainstream stratum. The dominant paradigm for quantitative research on social stratification is questioned, and social policies are suggested.*

Participation in the institutions of American society usually requires that a person obtain a job that is at least moderately well-paid (Coleman and Rainwater, 1978). Thus the degree of immobility of low-paid workers is highly relevant for the study of social welfare. From the individualistic perspective characteristic of much of modern social research, upward mobility will occur in accordance with merit: a free market ensures that a worker will obtain a job that matches his or her productive capacity (Gordon, 1972). A more complete view is that the ability to obtain jobs—not just ability to perform in them—is critical.

Labor market structure and social structure shape job access. The efforts of employers to control the labor process

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generate restrictive rules and practices governing recruitment and promotion (Edwards, 1979). "Institutional" barriers between jobs further develop through the collective efforts of workers to obtain shelter from market pressures (Freedman, 1976). These factors render some low-paid jobs more opportune than others and heighten the constraining effects of cultural expectations regarding the roles of women and minorities. At the same time, informal social networks, often delineated by gender and race, produce linkages between jobs (e.g. Granovetter, 1974 and 1981). These "social" linkages—embodied in interactions and contacts among persons who have different jobs—affect socialization and awareness of opportunities, and are basic to obtaining favorable treatment in hiring and promotion.

Thus, in shaping job access, labor market structure and social structure create differences in the advancement probabilities of low-paid workers. This study examines the occupational mobility of prime-age, low-paid workers during the period 1965 to 1970. The primary hypothesis is: gender, race, and particular low-paid occupation affect the probability of entering a well-paid occupation.<sup>1</sup>

This paper has four main sections. The first develops the conceptual framework for analyzing upward mobility. The second section describes the data and categories used in the analysis; and it examines the rates of upward mobility for groups defined by gender, race, and industrial sector. The third section fits a model that quantifies the effects of gender, race,

<sup>1</sup> This study shares a major limitation of individualistic studies in that inequality among positions is not directly addressed (Bielby, 1981). Study of mobility and job linkages, however, reveals a source of positional inequality: Restriction on upward mobility promotes a surplus of workers competing for low-paid jobs and reduces competition for better-paid jobs. Such redirection of supply worsens conditions at the lower end of the labor market, while protecting and elevating the positions of well-paid workers.

and particular low-paid occupation—controlling for industrial sector, age, and education. The fourth section discusses implications for evaluating the adequacy of the status attainment model of the stratification process.

### CONCEPTUALIZING UPWARD MOBILITY

The concept of labor segmentation is used in this analysis to overcome the tendency to view inequality as the consequence of the traits of individuals. Labor segmentation is regarded here as the analytical device of using groups rather than individuals as the primary units of analysis (Pomer, 1983).<sup>2</sup> This section defines labor segmentation on several levels.

According to the dual labor market model, the labor market consists of two segments, a primary and a secondary labor market (e.g., Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Discrimination and other social processes funnel women and minorities into the secondary labor market. Jobs in the secondary labor market are not only low-paid but also do not offer opportunity for career advancement. Primary jobs, in contrast, are better-paid and often lead to promotion.

The notion of two isolated labor markets—one for the privileged and the other for the disadvantaged—provides an image of the role of labor market structure and social structure in generating and reproducing inequality. Several studies using this model have aggregated detailed census occupations into two categories (e.g., Osterman, 1975; Rosenberg, 1980). This

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<sup>2</sup> Labor segments are defined more narrowly here than in other studies. Much of the research on labor segmentation has focused on validating, or invalidating, particular two- or three-segment segmentation schemes (e.g., Baron and Bielby, 1984; Reich, 1984; Hodson, 1984; Buchele, 1983). For review of other research applying a labor segmentation perspective and for an application of this perspective to historical materials, see Gordon, Edwards, and Reich (1982).

study also defines an advantaged and a disadvantaged segment on the basis of detailed census occupational categories. The disadvantaged segment, called the "low-paid stratum," consists of a subset of low-paid occupations that are unambiguously low-paid and for which there are sufficient observations for purposes of this study. The advantaged segment, called the "mainstream stratum," consists of all occupations with median earnings exceeding a specified level. Upward mobility is defined as movement from the low-paid stratum to the mainstream stratum.

Since the low-paid stratum consists only of a subset of low-paid occupations, the low-paid and mainstream strata defined here, unlike the categories of the dual labor market model, do not account for all occupations. Also, while it is sometimes assumed that the categories of the dual labor market model correspond to an actual division of the labor market, the low-paid and mainstream strata are intended only to serve as clearly defined analytical constructs for measuring differences in advancement.<sup>3</sup>

The dual labor market model has also been used to distinguish between a "core" sector of large, capital-intensive enterprises and a "periphery" sector of small enterprises that sell in more competitive markets.<sup>4</sup> There is evidence that occupational mobility reflects the presence of job ladders and internal labor markets within the core industrial sector (Tolbert, 1982; but see Jacobs, 1983). However, it may be that

<sup>3</sup> See Cain (1976) and Wachter (1974) for criticism of the dual labor market model, including the postulate that there is an actual division of the labor market into two parts.

<sup>4</sup> O'Connor (1973) and Averitt (1968) develop the concept of a dual economic structure. After classifying the three-digit census industries into core and periphery sectors, Beck et al. (1978, 1980), Bibb and Form (1977) and Hodson (1978) found that industrial sector has a strong independent impact on earnings. But see also Hauser (1980).

such promotion channels exclude the lowest paid occupations or that bureaucratic structures characteristic of the core restrict upward mobility, especially long-distance upward mobility.

Since workers in both the core and the periphery are employed at all occupational levels, mobility of workers from the periphery to the core is a poor indication of upward mobility. Thus rather than use the core-periphery distinction to define upward mobility, this study divides the low-paid stratum into core and periphery industrial sectors and then measures whether low-paid workers in the two sectors differ in their likelihood of moving upward.

Gender and race shape social contacts and interactions in this society. As a consequence, informal social linkages between low-paid and mainstream jobs are less likely to arise for women and blacks than for white men. Discriminatory preferences on the part of employers and unions, as well as attitudes and values that erode the authority of women and blacks, may bias institutional procedures regarding recruitment and promotion (Hartman, 1976; Bergmann and Darity, 1980; Wolf and Fligstein, 1979). In this study, therefore, the low-paid stratum is divided by gender and race.

Segmentation is defined in this study on still another basis—a worker's particular low-paid occupation. Some low-paid occupations may include positions from which employers draw to fill positions of greater responsibility. For example, stock handlers may be promoted to positions as stock room supervisors or managers. A worker's particular low-paid occupation also affects social contacts and exposure to labor market opportunities, thereby influencing the probability of obtaining a better job with another employer. For example, through frequent contact with truck drivers, a garage worker may become

aware of the economic benefits of becoming a truck driver, develop a conception of self that includes the possibility of being a truck driver, and learn how to obtain union membership.<sup>5</sup>

A satisfactory analysis of mobility requires that attention also be given to age and education, two factors that are not central to the segmentation perspective but much stressed by individualistic analyses (e.g., Sandefur, 1981; Sorensen and Tuma, 1981; Felmler, 1982). Controlling for level of job rewards, the higher the education of the worker the more likely it is that the level of worker resources will not be matched by the level of job rewards. Thus, the probability of upward mobility for workers in the low-paid stratum can be expected to increase with education. Age, seen as a proxy for experience, has two effects. First, experience may enhance productive capacity, although at some point age may also be associated with obsolescence of skills and weakening of capacities. Second, it takes time for the worker to be matched with an appropriate job, and thus younger age is correlated with higher levels of upward mobility. Also, given the longer time-horizon, the younger worker has more to gain by responding to an opportunity for a better job.<sup>6</sup>

### DATA, CATEGORIES, AND MOBILITY RATES

This study utilizes the 1970 Census, a unique resource for studying occupational mobility. For this census, but not for the more recent decennial census, data were collected not only on current occupation but also on occupation five years earlier.

<sup>5</sup> Low-paid occupations may also differ in their effects on the development of skills and values. See Stolzenberg (1975) and Slomczynski et al. (1981) for discussion of occupational effects.

<sup>6</sup> The partial adjustment model of Rosenfeld (1980), which incorporates both the mismatch notion of Tuma (1976) and the vacancy notion of Sorensen (1977), assumes that with time the worker reaches a job which matches his or her level of resources.

<sup>7</sup> The very large size of this data base, which covers about two million workers, makes possible analysis of occupational mobility for narrowly defined categories. <sup>8</sup>

The sample analyzed here consists of persons employed in 1965 in seventeen low-paid occupations. <sup>9</sup> The jobs in this low-paid stratum are typical of those held by the working poor. Ten of the occupations refer to service work (cleaners, cooks, dishwashers, fountain workers, waiters and waitresses, food service workers, personal attendants, porters, crossing guards, and household servants). Five refer to laborer jobs (carpenters' helpers, gardeners, lumber workers, stock handlers, and vehicle washers). Two are categories of operatives (garage workers and produce graders).

The low-paid stratum is divided into eight segments on the basis of industrial sector (core/periphery), gender (white/black), and race (black/white). The operational definitions of core and periphery are from Beck et al. (1978). <sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Information on previous occupation was collected for three percent of the population (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the data base does not include information on the family of origin. Thus no attempt can be made here to determine the effects of socioeconomic origins on the probability of occupational advancement.

<sup>9</sup> Included in the low-paid stratum are three-digit occupations with median earnings below \$4000 in 1969 dollars. To increase the homogeneity of the stratum, nonmanual occupations are excluded; and to permit estimation of occupational effects, occupations with fewer than fifty white male occupational changers are also excluded. For more information on the low-paid stratum and other categories and variables used in the analysis, see Pomer (1984).

<sup>10</sup> The eight segments of the low-paid stratum are black females employed in the periphery sector, white females in the periphery, black males in the periphery, white males in the periphery, black females in the core, white females in the core, black males in the core, and white males in the core.



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**Table 1. Education and Age by Labor Segment of Low-Paid Stratum**

Labor Segment	N	ED		AGE	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
White Males in Core	2807	9.6	3.1	43.5	7.0
Black Males in Core	1240	9.3	3.1	43.3	6.8
White Females in Core	5842	10.2	2.4	45.9	6.1
Black Females in Core	2033	9.7	2.6	43.6	6.6
White Males in Periphery	10279	9.8	3.2	42.0	7.0
Black Males in Periphery	2971	8.6	3.4	42.2	6.9
White Females in Periphery	18955	10.2	2.4	43.5	6.7
Black Females in Periphery	10289	8.8	2.8	43.5	6.6
Total	54416	9.7	2.8	43.4	6.8

Notes: ED is educational attainment measured in years, and AGE is years of age.

Table A of the Appendix displays the occupational distributions for the eight segments.

The analysis is concerned with two ratio-level independent variables, age (AGE) and educational attainment (ED), both measured in years. For each labor segment, Table 1 displays the mean and standard deviation for these two variables.

The mainstream stratum is defined by all (three-digit) occupations with median earnings above \$6000 in 1969. Workers in occupations which fall below the mainstream boundary are not likely to earn enough for their families to participate in the social mainstream (Coleman and Rainwater, 1978). Thus movement from the low-paid stratum to the mainstream stratum suggests rising from a disadvantaged position to a position in the mainstream of American society.

The upward mobility rate for each segment, which

**Table 2.** Upward Mobility Rates for Labor Segments

Labor Segment	Rate(%)
White Males in Core	22.4
Black Males in Core	14.4
White Females in Core	10.5
Black Females in Core	6.0
White Males in Periphery	29.3
Black Males in Periphery	17.0
White Females in Periphery	12.4
Black Females in Periphery	5.2
Total	14.6

Notes: Each upward mobility rate is the proportion of those in the specified labor segment of the low-paid stratum who moved to the mainstream stratum.

is the proportion of workers who moved into the mainstream stratum, is displayed in Table 2. Each rate is an estimate of the probability of upward mobility for individuals within a particular segment—without taking into account particular low-paid occupation, age, and education. Overall, less than 15% of workers in the low-paid stratum moved up to the mainstream stratum. The rate of upward mobility, however, varies markedly across the eight labor segments. Highest is the rate for white males in the periphery, just under 30%. Lowest is the rate for black females in the periphery, approximately 5%.

The mobility rates do not support the hypothesis that low-paid workers are more likely to move up if they are employed in the core than in the periphery. Except for black females, the upward mobility rate for the race-gender groups are higher in the periphery than the core. The differential favoring the periphery is largest for white men, about 7 percentage points; for black men and white women, the differential is about 2 percentage points. For black women, there is a 1 percentage point differential favoring the core sector.

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There are large mobility differentials favoring men over women, and whites over blacks. The male advantage among whites is about 17 percentage points in the periphery and 12 points in the core; among blacks, the male advantage is 12 percentage points in the periphery and 8 points in the core. The advantage of whites over blacks is about 12 percentage points for men in the periphery and 8 points in the core; among women, the advantage of whites is about 7 points in the periphery and 5 points in the core.

If the mainstream stratum were precisely defined so that it excluded all low-paid jobs, then the lack of upward mobility, and the inequality of such mobility by gender and race, would be even more pronounced.<sup>11</sup> Especially when it is considered that the data were drawn from an era of rapid economic growth and government intervention to oppose gender and racial job barriers, these results strongly suggest unequal access to mainstream jobs. However, the analysis has not taken age, education, and particular low-paid occupation into account. The next section fits a multivariate model to the data in order to provide estimates of the effects of race and gender that control for other variables. In addition, the model estimates the constraining effects of particular low-paid occupations.

### MODEL OF UPWARD MOBILITY

Upward mobility is modeled in two steps. The first step for a low-paid worker is to leave his or her occupation. The second step is to enter the mainstream stratum.<sup>12</sup> The model for the second step is based on occupational changers

<sup>11</sup> Rates of upward mobility to the mainstream stratum may be higher for low-paid jobs excluded from the low-paid stratum defined here.

<sup>12</sup> Mathematical models of mobility traditionally divide the mobility process into two steps, where the first step is leaving a position and the second step is entering a new one (Tuma, 1976: 339).

only (Pomer, 1984). After presenting the model for the first step, this section examines the complete model obtained by combining the first and second steps.

*Probability of Changing Occupation*

Guided by the results for the second step, a linear model is applied to the probability of changing occupation. It is assumed that factors that effect the probability of upward mobility for occupational changers also affect the probability of changing occupation. The independent variables include binary variables for the low-paid occupations (relative to garage workers), the race-gender groups (relative to white males), and the periphery industrial sector (relative to the core sector). Years of educational attainment (ED) and age (AGE) are also included as independent variables. The estimated coefficients are reported in the Appendix, Table B.

Blacks and women are less likely to change occupation than are white men. The race and gender differentials are about 5 percentage points. The effect of industrial sector has about the same magnitude as the effects of race and gender: employment in the periphery increases the probability of occupational change by 6 percentage points.<sup>13</sup> For each year of schooling, the probability of occupational change increases about 1 percentage point, while each year of age reduces the probability by about three-quarters of a percentage

<sup>13</sup> The model for the probability of upward mobility for occupational changers also fails to demonstrate, except for older and/or better-educated black males, that the periphery sector is any less opportune than the core sector. It may be that the core-periphery distinction is ineffectual for capturing opportunity differences related to industry (Hodson, 1984). Thus detailed investigation of industrial effects on mobility is an important next step to confirm and extend the findings reported here. Indeed, it may be crucial to have data on workplaces (Stolzenberg, 1978; Baron and Bielby, 1980).

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point. The age coefficient is especially consequential because age varies more than does years of schooling. The occupational coefficients range from -20.5 to 4.0. The occupations that most enhance the probability of occupational change are carpenters' helpers, fountain workers, and garage workers. The occupations that most restrict occupational change are household servants, waiters and waitresses, gardeners, and cooks.

### *Probability of Upward Mobility*

The probability of upward mobility equals the product of two probabilities: the probability of changing occupation times the probability of upward mobility conditional on being an occupational changer. Thus the complete model is obtained by multiplying the equation for changing occupation by the equation for the upward mobility of occupational changers. The resulting model is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{RATE} = & (60.6 - 23.6 \text{ FEMALE} - 11.8 \text{ BLACK} + 2.43 \text{ ED} - 0.47 \text{ AGE} + \theta) \\ & (69.8 - 3.99 \text{ BLACK MALE} - 4.27 \text{ WHITE FEMALE} - 5.32 \text{ BLACK FEMALE} \\ & + 1.08 \text{ ED} - 0.76 \text{ AGE} + 6.27 \text{ PERIPHERY} + \delta). \end{aligned}$$

RATE is the estimated probability of upward mobility. The values of  $\theta$  are given in Pomer (1984), and the values of  $\delta$  correspond to the occupational coefficients in Table B of the Appendix. <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The estimated model for the conditional probability of upward mobility specifies additional interaction parameters for three groups of workers employed in the periphery—black males, black female household servants, and white female waitresses. Taking these interactions into account complicates the discussion without substantially altering the results, with one important exception: For black males in the periphery, age is especially disadvantageous and education exceptionally low in value (Pomer, 1984).

**Table 3.** Standardized Mobility Rates for Race-Gender Groups

Group	Rate(%)
White Males	22.7
Black Males	16.3
White Females	12.3
Black Females	8.2

Note: Each rate is a standardized rate of upward mobility for a particular race-gender group. The standardization is achieved by entering mean values for the independent variables into the equation presented in the text.

*Standardized Rates of Upward Mobility*

This model is now used to generate standardized rates of upward mobility. The standardized rates make possible comparisons that focus on one variable at a time, while controlling for the other variable.

The standardized rates of upward mobility for the race-gender groups control for group differences in the distributions of age, education, industrial sector, and occupation. These rates are obtained from the model by specifying the appropriate values for the race/gender binary variables and the mean values for all other independent variables.<sup>15</sup> The effects of gender and race on upward mobility are clearly evident (Table 3). The standardized rates range from 8.2% for black women to 22.7% for white men. Being a woman cuts the probability of upward mobility in half, and being black reduces the probability by about a quarter.

Similarly, standardized rates are obtained for each low-paid occupation by setting one of the occupational binary variables to unity, the other occupational binary variables to zero, and the other independent variables to their

<sup>15</sup> The means for occupational changers are entered into the sub-model referring to the upward mobility of occupational changers.

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means. These standardized rates, displayed in Table 4, control for differences among occupations in the distributions of gender, race, industrial sector, age, and education. The values indicate strong occupational effects, with the standardized rates ranging from under 10% to almost 30%. The operative and labor occupations tend to be more opportune than the service occupations. The mean rate of upward mobility for the service occupations is 14.1%, compared with a mean of 20.3% for the laborer and operative occupations. Employment as a garage worker, carpenters' helper, or stock handler strongly improves the probability of upward mobility. Employment as a household servant, waiter or waitress, cleaner, or dishwasher sharply lessens the probability of advancement.<sup>16</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STATUS-ATTAINMENT MODEL

Due largely to Otis Dudley Duncan and his students, the status attainment model has dominated the quantitative study of social stratification since the late sixties.<sup>17</sup> The

<sup>16</sup> To assess differences in opportunity it may be more valid to look only at occupational changers (see Jacobs, 1983). For example, gardeners change occupation less often than do dishwashers, which may reflect that gardeners are more satisfied with their work than are dishwashers. Nevertheless, the findings obtained here are similar to those obtained by Pomer (1984) for occupational changers.

<sup>17</sup> Influential works include Blau and Duncan (1967), Duncan et al. (1972), Hauser and Featherman (1977), and Jencks et al. (1979). See Featherman (1981) for a review of the accomplishments of this research tradition. The "human capital" tradition that is dominant in labor economics is consistent with the status attainment model, though narrower in focus. Idealizing the labor market as a mechanism that develops and utilizes individual productivity, human capital theory is based on assumptions that imply that the labor market works optimally. See, for example, Leigh's (1976: 132) claim that it has been "demonstrated" that "workers pass through an optimal sequence of jobs."

status attainment model is a model of the process of individual attainment ("achievement" or "success"). It purports to show how persons progress from their social origins to positions on the socioeconomic continuum. Depending on the version of the model, two or more sequential steps are distinguished. Most emphasized is the "educational attainment" step, though some attention has also been given to the acquisition of values and the initial occupational position on entry into the labor market. The predominant theme is the importance of education: not only is it found that educational attainment is the major causal determinant of individual attainment, but also it is shown that educational attainment is largely independent of social origins. The attainment model does not directly relate the mobility or immobility of low-paid workers to the characteristics of the labor market and the society at large. Indeed, the mobility of low-paid workers is a subject that is not likely to arise within this paradigm.<sup>18</sup>

A key feature of the attainment model is the Duncan index of socioeconomic status (SEI), a mathematical contrivance that contributes to the individualistic focus. The SEI index specifies the socioeconomic position of the individual on a vertical continuum (Duncan, 1961). When career mobility is included in the analysis, SEI is also used to specify whatever it is about a person's job at one point in time that is material for predicting the person's socioeconomic position subsequently (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Sewell et al., 1980; see also

<sup>18</sup> For further critique of the status attainment model, see Spilerman (1977), Horan (1978), Kalleberg and Sorensen (1979), Pomer (1981), and Berg (1981). Attempts have been made to overcome the individualistic focus of the attainment model by simply fitting the model separately to population subgroups. The limitations of this approach are particularly evident in the study of gender inequality, as illustrated by Hauser and Featherman (1977), which "found no evidence of inequality of opportunity by sex for educational and occupational status" (xxv).



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**Table 4. Standardized Mobility Rates and SEI Values for Low-Paid Occupations**

Occupation	Rate(%)	SEI
Garage Workers	28.8	17.9
Carpenters' Helpers	24.9	7.2
Stock Handlers	20.0	16.7
Lumber Workers	19.2	4.1
Produce Graders	18.7	12.2
Fountain Workers	17.9	17.0
Personal Attendants	17.9	26.3
Food Service Workers	16.9	11.0
Vehicle Washers	16.8	8.6
Crossing Guards	15.7	17.9
Porters	14.4	7.8
Cook	14.1	15.0
Gardeners	13.7	10.9
Dishwashers	13.1	11.0
Cleaners	12.5	7.8
Waiters and Waitresses	10.5	16.0
Household Servants	7.7	7.0

Note: Each rate is a standardized rate of upward mobility for a particular low-paid occupation. The standardization is achieved by entering mean values for the independent variables into the equation presented in the text. The SEI values are scores for the Duncan socio-economic index for the 1970 Census occupational categories (Hauser and Featherman, 1977, Appendix B).

Leigh, 1978, and Rosenfeld, 1980, who employ the SEI index to relate change in SEI to prior SEI).

The attainment model characterizes upward mobility as a process of climbing a ladder calibrated by the SEI index. To determine whether such a view is applicable to the mobility of low-paid workers, the SEI values for the low-paid occupations are compared to the standardized rates of upward mobility.<sup>19</sup> Are low-paid workers with higher SEI values more

<sup>19</sup> Note that the boundary of the mainstream stratum is defined on

likely to reach the mainstream stratum?

In Table 4, the low-paid occupations are ranked by the standardized rate of upward mobility. Column 2 gives the values of the Duncan SEI index for each occupation.<sup>20</sup> Comparison of column 1 with column 2 reveals little correspondence between SEI and mobility advantage. For example, even though service occupations tend to be less opportune than operative and laborer occupations, the mean SEI value for the service occupations (13.7) exceeds the mean SEI value for the operative and laborer occupations (11.1). The linear correlation is only 0.20, which may be interpreted as stating that 4% of the variation in the standardized rate can be explained by SEI. Thus, for the occupations analyzed, the SEI index does not indicate which low-paid occupations are most likely to lead to the mainstream.

### CONCLUSION

The scope of disadvantage in the labor market is not revealed by individualistic models of social stratification. As has been demonstrated here, for example, reliance on the socioeconomic status continuum obscures the constraining effects of labor market structure. In contrast, this study applied a segmentation approach to analyze the immobility of low-paid workers. The analysis was based on the occupational mobility between 1965 and 1970 of prime-age, low-paid workers.

The findings bring disadvantage into clear view. First, the poor tend to remain poor. For the sample studied, only one of seven workers in the low-paid stratum moved into the mainstream stratum. Second, women and blacks are much less

the basis of median earnings, not SEI. Thus a less demanding test of the attainment model would define the mainstream boundary on the basis of SEI.

<sup>20</sup> The SEI values are from Hauser and Featherman (1977, Appendix B).

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likely than white men to move up "the occupational ladder." For example, 95% of black women failed to move into the mainstream stratum.

According to the multivariate model of the probability of upward mobility, the mobility disadvantages of women and blacks cannot be attributed to age, education, and the tendency to be employed in less opportune jobs. The model also shows that, even for white men, some low-paid occupations sharply restrict access to mainstream jobs.

The severely restricted advancement of women and blacks may be due to the legacy of prejudice toward women and minorities. It may also be the consequence of informal social networks which socialize persons for work roles, determine exposure to job opportunities, and influence hiring and promotion decisions.

In the face of the restricted access to mainstream jobs, there is a need for vigorous policy efforts. Welfare programs to correct individual "deficiencies" may be of only limited benefit. Especially needed are economic policies that improve the level of rewards of jobs typically held by low-paid workers. Even more vital are policies to make mainstream jobs more available by increasing their quantity in the economy. Another strategy is to call for the restructuring of organizations so that more low-paid jobs lead to upward mobility. Finally, the lack of advancement of women and blacks suggests the necessity to monitor institutional practices of recruitment and promotion.

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# APPENDIX

**Table A.** Workers in Low-Paid Stratum by Occupation, Industrial Sector, Race, and Gender

	Periphery Sector				Core Sector			
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
	Men	Men	Wom.	Wom.	Men	Men	Wom.	Wom.
Garage Workers (623)	2358	378	75	7	86	35	4	0
Produce Graders (625)	8	0	27	3	65	9	286	24
Carpenter's Helpers (750)	24	5	2	0	189	77	3	0
Gardeners (755)	1251	332	40	11	726	148	32	5
Lumber Workers (761)	1083	347	19	5	26	5	2	0
Stock Handlers (762)	1240	182	939	127	486	89	173	23
Vehicle Washers (764)	210	223	44	23	184	96	12	10
Cleaners (902)	450	352	405	336	362	363	805	733
Cooks (912)	2076	548	2603	1108	309	225	2123	684
Dishwashers (913)	213	73	190	103	39	14	82	21
Fountain Workers (914)	136	16	469	88	6	4	361	58
Waiters and Waitresses (915)	710	193	11626	668	43	44	314	64
Food Serv. Workers,nec(916)	254	81	640	273	115	61	1186	317
Personal Attendants (933)	97	25	155	34	59	23	124	47
Porters (934)	90	35	5	0	23	43	2	2
Crossing Guards (960)	5	1	4	3	89	4	333	45
Household Servants (984)	74	180	1712	7500	0	0	0	0
Total	10279	2971	18955	10289	2807	1240	5842	2033

Notes: The sample consists of white and black persons aged 26-49 in 1965 who were in the experienced civilian labor force in 1965 and 1970, and employed in 1965 in one of the 17 low-paid occupations listed in the table (N= 54,416). The numbers in parentheses are census three-digit occupational codes. The core/ periphery distinction refers to the dual industrial structure as operationalized by Beck et al. (1978). Data source: the three one-in-a-hundred Public Use Samples of the 1970 Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972).



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**Table B. Regression Model of Probability of Changing Occupation**

Independent Variable	Estimate	Std. Error
CONSTANT	69.8	1.97
BLACK MALE	-3.99	0.84
WHITE FEMALE	-4.27	0.65
BLACK FEMALE	-5.32	0.80
PERIPHERY	6.27	0.58
ED	1.08	0.08
AGE	-0.76	0.03
Garage Workers	—	—
Produce Graders	-9.0	2.5
Carpenters' Helpers	4.0	2.8
Gardeners	-19.7	1.3
Lumber Workers	-8.0	1.5
Stock Handlers	-6.4	1.2
Vehicle Washers	-13.1	1.9
Cleaners	-14.4	1.2
Cooks	-18.8	1.1
Dishwashers	-0.9	1.9
Fountain Workers	0.2	1.7
Waiters and Waitresses	-19.8	1.1
Food Service Workers,nec	-2.5	1.3
Personal Attendants	-10.7	2.2
Porters	-9.2	3.4
Crossing Guards	-15.4	2.4
Household Servants	-20.5	1.2

Notes: Results are from a linear probability model fitted to the entire sample. See Pomer (1984) for description of the estimation method.